

Franklin Graham: America Has a Heart Problem

Dear Friend,

Once again, a few days ago, we were reminded of the dangers in the world we live in when bombs exploded at the finish line of the historic Boston Marathon, killing three and injuring more than 250.

The images of blood-stained sidewalks and people running in terror—and the images of firefighters, police officers, and other heroic individuals rushing desperately to try to save lives and help the injured—will be etched in our memory for years to come.

Because of the constant stream of media coverage that is available to us, we may think that violence is more frequent in our generation, but I don't think that it's any more prevalent than it has been since Cain killed Abel. Every generation in history has been filled with wickedness and violence and cruelty—it all comes from the human heart. The Bible says, "The hearts of the children of man are full of evil" (Ecclesiastes 9:3, ESV). Jesus said, "From within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder" (Mark 7:21).

While I was writing this letter, I had a phone call from the White House about proposed gun legislation in the Senate. I reminded them that you could pass more gun laws every single day and it won't change the human heart. Only Christ can change the heart, and what America has today is a heart problem.

When we look at violence in our world, there's nothing more violent than what happened 2,000 years ago when the Romans stripped our Lord, beat Him, spat on Him, mocked Him, brutally

nailed Him to the cross, and thrust a spear into His side. He suffered and died for our sins, providing the only cure for sin-sick hearts and the one real hope for a broken world. So I think the greatest work we can be involved in is telling others about Christ and His saving work.

When my father was asked to address the nation from the Washington National Cathedral after 9/11, he said, "The cross tells us that God understands our sin and our suffering, for He took them upon Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. And from the cross, God declares, 'I love you. I know the heartaches and the sorrows and the pains that you feel. But I love you.'"

That is a message our nation needs to hear, including your unsaved family members and unsaved friends who desperately need the hope of the Gospel.

We have a unique opportunity to do that with *My Hope America with Billy Graham*, our largest evangelistic event in this country ever. Instead of filling a stadium, the outreach will culminate in tens of thousands of living rooms this coming November, the month my father turns 95. Hosts—hopefully including you—will invite a few nonbeliever friends and loved ones to join them in watching a dynamic new TV program that weaves powerful stories of changed lives around a fresh message of hope that my father is preparing.

But the effort doesn't start in November—*My Hope America* begins right now, with targeted prayer and intentional relationship-building. In any kind of evangelism, whether large-scale or one-on-one, people do not respond to the Gospel unless God has first made them ready and opened their hearts to hear. I urge you to make a list of specific people you know who need Jesus Christ in their lives and then start praying faithfully and persistently that God will open their hearts. God, who "desires all people to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4), is pleased with this kind of praying and often answers in

unexpected ways.

As you pray for individuals on your list, please also pray for this entire nationwide outreach. Be sure your own church and pastor know about *My Hope America*. This undertaking is huge, but so is the need, and we ask also for your financial support in carrying out the task.

God sees every person's inner pain and struggle, along with the sin and guilt that lead to death. Because of His love, He is "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Millions of Americans, some right in your own community, need a Savior. Working together, we can introduce them to Jesus.

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